

Amendments To the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any canceled claims at a later date.

1.-16. (canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A system for executing at least one software program which needs to be enabled by a license key of a specific type, the software program configured for open-loop or closed-loop control when executed by least one automation component, the system comprising:

~~at least one~~ a plurality of license key handlers of different types for receiving a license keys of different types, respectively; and

a license key handler manager ~~configured to be connected by a data link to each~~ license key handler to ~~and~~ exchange data with each license key handler, said license key manager thereby providing one interface for a user for license enabling for software programs.

18. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 17, wherein ~~the system comprises at least first and second license key handlers, and the license key handler manager is configured to be connected to the at least first and second~~ transfer the license key of one type to a license key handlers of this same type.

19. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim ~~17~~ 18, wherein the ~~first and second~~ plurality of license key handlers are ~~of different types~~ associated with a license key memory, in which case the license key handler stores the license key in the license key memory.

20. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in claim 18, wherein the license key handler manager is configured to identify the ~~at least first and second~~ plurality of license key handlers by type.

21. (previously presented) The system as claimed in claim 18, wherein the license key handler manager is configured to identify a license requirement related to the software program.

22. (previously presented) The system as claimed in claim 17, wherein
the system is a distributed system having at least first and second automation
components connected by a data link,
the license key handler is configured to be executed on the first or second automation
component,
the software program is configured to be executed on the first automation
components, and
the license key handler manager:
is configured to be executed on the first or second automation component, and
has a data connection to the license key handler.

23. (previously presented) The system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the license key handler manager and the license key handler form one integrated software program.

24. (previously presented) The system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the system is an automation component having runtime software.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling the execution of at least one software program which needs to be enabled by ~~via~~ a license key of a specific type, the method comprising:

providing at least first and second license key handlers of different types for receiving a license keys of different types, respectively;

connecting the first and second license handlers to a license key handler manager, said license key manager thereby providing one interface for a user for license enabling for software programs; and

identifying the type of license key handler of the at least ~~the~~ first or ~~the~~ second license key handler by the license key handler manager.

26. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 25, further comprising:

transferring the license key of one type to a license key memory of the identified first or second license key handler of this same type by the license key handler manager; and

retrieving the license key from the license key memory by the license key handler, wherein the execution of the software program is enabled by a check of the license key at the identified first or second license key handler using the software program.

27. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 25, further comprising:

transferring the license key to a license key server by the license key handler manager; and

transmitting the license key of one type to the identified first or second license key handler of this same type by the license key server, wherein the execution of the software program is enabled by a check of the license key at the identified first or second license key handler using the software program.

28. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the license key is stored in and retrieved from a license key memory of the identified first or second license key handler.

29. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 25, further comprising:
transferring the license key of one type to the license key handler of this same type by
the license key handler manager; and

storing the license key in a license key memory of the identified first or second key
handler, wherein the execution of the software program is enabled by a check of the license
key at the identified first or second license key handler using the software program.

30. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the software
program is executed in an embedded runtime system of an industrial automation or drive
system having at least one automation component.

31. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein at least two
software programs need to be enabled by at least first and second license keys of different
types, further comprising transferring the first license key to the first license key handler,
wherein the first license key and the first license key handler are of the same type.

32. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the license key
handler manager is executed on a personal computer.

33. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the first or
second license key handler has a license key memory, and the license key handler manager
transfers the license key to the license key memory.

34. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the first or
second license handler has a license key memory, and the license key handler stores the
license key in the license key memory or reads the license key from the license key
memory.

35. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the first and second license key handlers are configured to handle license keys of different types, and the license key handler manager identifies a type of the identified at least first or the second license key handler.

36. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, further comprising adding software modules to the license key handler manager for updating the license key handler manager to communicate with a new type of license key handler.

37. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the license key handler manager is provided with the license key over the Internet.